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ACTION: POL-2
INFO: AEC ADON ECON
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ISLAMABAD 5922

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDO/AF

JULY 24, 1973

R 231233Z JUL 73
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 176
INFO RUEVLK/AMEMBASSY KABUL 3329
RUEBAE/NEW DELHI 9974
RUESMR/TEHRAN 1932
BT

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFORM, AF

SUBJECT: VIEWS OF AFGHAN AMB POPAL ON OCCUP D'ETAT

1. CHARGE, ACCOMPANIED BY POLOFF (WOLFE), SPENT OVER AN HOUR WITH AFGHAN AMB POPAL AT HIS RESIDENCE, BY APPOINTMENT.

2. POPAL DERIDED TALK HE HAD HEARD THAT PRINCE DAUD IS A COMMUNIST. HE NARRATED FAMILIAR STORY THAT DAUD'S INABILITY WHEN HE WAS PRINCE TO OBTAIN WEAPONS FROM USA HAD TURNED HIM TOWARD SOVIET UNION. HE WENT ON TO SAY DAUD IS NEITHER RIGHTIST OR LEFTIST, BUT INTIMATED HE COULD BE EXPECTED TURN TOWARD LEFT IN SENSE OF PLACING MORE EMPHASIS ON SOCIAL WELFARE. HE SAID DAUD WOULD MEET WITH OPPOSITION BY LANDLORDS, BIG BUSINESSMEN, CORRUPT INTERESTS, AND MULLAHS.

3. LIKEWISE, POPAL RIDICULED RUMORS THAT NEW AFGHAN GOVT WOULD STIR UP TROUBLE IN NWFP ON PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUE, OBSERVING THAT FOR ONE THING NEW GOVT WOULD HAVE ITS HANDS FULL WITH OTHER MORE PRESSING MATTERS. HE SAID IF AFGHAN GOVT RESORTED TO ACTIVIST MEASURES ON THIS ISSUE, SOVIET TROOPS MIGHT EVENTUALLY HAVE TO BE BROUGHT IN TO ASSIST AFGHANS, AND HE ASKED RHETORICALLY QTE HOW THEN WOULD WE GET THE SOVIET TROOPS OUT? UNQTE HE SAID NEW AFGHAN GOVT WOULD NOT BE SO STUPID AS TO BRING ABOUT THAT KIND OF SITUATION.

4. POPAL PREDICTED THAT DAUD WOULD EVENTUALLY INTRODUCE TWO-PARTY POLITICAL SYSTEM IN AFGHANISTAN.

5. HE SPECULATED THAT KING ZAHIR WOULD PUT UP PHILOSOPHICALLY WITH TURN OF EVENTS, AND SIMPLY SEEK TO HAVE NEW GOVT RELEASE HIS FAMILY TO JOIN HIM AHEAD.



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YX COMMENT: POPAL HAS BEEN MUCH SOUGHT AFTER IN DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES HERE DURING RECENT DAYS FOR OBVIOUS REASONS. HE MADE HIS FIRST PUBLIC APPEARANCE AFTER COUP D'ETAT AT BELGIUM NATIONAL DAY RECEPTION JULY 21. IT IS WIDELY KNOWN THAT HE WAS WINED DURING EARLIER DAUD GOVT AND THAT ABOUT 1963 HE WAS ACTING PRINCE FOR TIME. ALTHOUGH QUITE WELL PLACED IN AFGHAN SOCIETY, HE HAS PROBABLY NEVER REALLY BEEN IN TOP ECHELON AND WAS UNDOUBTEDLY FRANK AND SINCERE IN TELLING US THAT HE REGARDS HIMSELF AS COLLEAGUE RATHER THAN FRIEND OF PRINCE DAUD. HE ONLY SPECULATED GENERALLY OR AVOIDED SPECULATION IN RESPONSE TO NUMBER OF QUESTIONS ABOUT RECENT EVENTS AND THEIR ANTECEDENTS.

DECONTROL JUNE 30, 1974

SANDERHOFF

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